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CONSULTANCY

The Importance Of Colour

Colour is the first thing we register when we are assessing anything and we make an immediate response to it before anything else. Colour is one of the most effective tools that can be used to make an impact, and this applies to what we wear. Psychologists have suggested that colour impression can account for 60% of the acceptance or rejection of any product or service.

How Colour Influences Our Life

Scientifically, colour as we have just said is the first thing we register when we are assessing anything, as we see the colour first, before we register what we are actually looking at. We therefore act instantly and instinctively to colour. Take a simple example of an insect flying towards you. If it is blue you would remain calm, if on the other hand it was brown with yellow stripes the response would be different! We all act on instinct to colour and in many instances our responses to colour can help us survive. For example, if you were swimming in the sea and saw a large grey object swimming toward you and could not see the object only the colour, you probably swim away as fast as possible. Grey in this instance immediately triggers a danger response, the object could be a shark and colour signals danger.

As society has developed it has reinforced our association with certain colours to trigger a response. Ever wondered why the uniforms of so many police or armed forces personnel and even traffic wardens are black or dark blue? The reason is that these colours signify power and authority. Go into a Hospital or dentist waiting room and you will often see pale green frequently because of its soothing, relaxing effects. Take a road sign, traffic light or warning notice, see red and you know you probably need to be cautious. In conclusion each and everyday of our lives we react to colour in some shape or form.

Using Colours To Your Advantage

As we have seen we all react to colour but we can also use the influence of colour to our advantage, to create an impression. If you've never really thought much about how much of an influence colour has on your life then its time to start. Understanding what different colours mean to other people and how to use these colours to enhance your image will help you gain more from your life.

Colour Groups

Let's firstly break the colours into three distinct groups and the affects they normally convey to most people.

Neutral colors: Black, white, grey, beige, brown

Neutrals can be described as non-colours. They don't appear on the colour spectrum at all and are created by mixing other shades together. They will normally affect a positive influence if worn correctly, particularly black, which signifies confidence and authority. White is not actually a colour, but represents an absence of colour. It denotes purity, innocence and honesty but, can also be firm and authoritative. Is not seen as confrontational and can even be seen as a weak colour, keep in mind the white flag is universally seen as a sign of surrender.

Warm colors: Red, orange, yellow, yellow-green, purple

Warm colours stimulate the nervous system and amplify our emotions. They are vivid, strong and catch our attention. Yellow and orange can be seen as fun colours, while red and purple can indicate strength and authority.

Cool Colours: Blue, violet, turquoise, aqua, green

Cool colours are easy on the eyes, creating a sense of calm and relaxation. Light blue shades, green and aqua can evoke peacefulness and tranquility, as well as conveying a fun attitude. Darker blues on the other hand can denote authority trustworthiness, dependability and loyalty.

The above examples are how most people broadly view colour in their life. Some of the response to colours will be instinctive and some will be conditioned by society. Not everyone will of course view all the colours in the way but, as a general guide the above is a good foundation to work from.

Why is Black So Popular?

Consider this simple fact around 60% of clothes sold in the UK are black. The reason for this is that black can be used both formally and informally to great affect. Wearing black Formally suggests elegance, strength, authority and power. If You have to attend a business interview black is always a great colour. In Western culture if worn in the right way in a formal setting it will trigger a positive response. Now consider wearing red to business meeting. While many people like red as a colour many may not, as it can be viewed as over the top attention, grabbing and sometimes even confrontational. When worn properly in any situation black clothing also conveys neatness, simplicity. Black may be seen as a safe colour but it is extremely effective if worn in the right way to trigger a positive response.

You Don't Always Have To Wear Black!

Black is a great colour but you shouldn't wear it all the time; life would be boring if you did! You can see from the above groups that all the neutral colours will work for a formal business meeting as well as darker blues. While black is a great "safe choice" knowing how to use other colours can help you stress your own individuality and style and knowing how to combine and coordinate more than one colour can reinforce this even further.

Let us take a colour wheel and the basic colors depicted. Each colours is made up of the following characteristics:



1. Hue

This is the actual colour illustrated on the colour wheel.

2. Shade

This represents the shade of the colour and represents the amount of black and white added to the particular hue. For example, pink is the shade of red due to the result of more white. And purple is a darker shade of red due to more black.

3. Saturation

This is the vividness or intensity of the color. Red is more saturated than Russet although they are from the same hue and shade. These then create three groups:

4. Similar Colours

these are colours adjacent to each other. Examples are Red and Red-Orange, Yellow-Green and Yellow. Or colours with one colour in-between in the colour wheel. Examples are Blue and Green, Red and Orange.

5. Contrasting Colours

this is when there are three colors between them on the color wheel. Examples are like Purple and Orange and Red and Blue.

6. Complementary Colours

When colors are opposite each other in the chart, they are considered complementary. Examples are Blue and Orange, Yellow and purple.

- Light colours are basic hues with white
- Dull colours are hues with grey.
- Vivid colours are the basic hues.
- Dark colours combine basic hues with black.
- Achromatic colours are shades of black and grey.

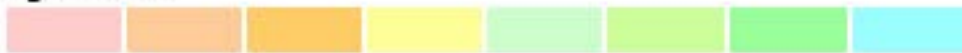
Examples of all the above.

Combining Colours

Combining is all about creating a mix of colours that create complement each other. Here are some simple examples of colour combinations and the look they can create:

Light and Dull Colours

Light Colors



Dull Colors



When these colours are combined they can create a bright, happy combination.

Dull & Dark Colours

Dull Colors



Dark Colors



When these colours are combined they look strong and serious and create a great formal look

Vivid Colours

Vivid Colors



So far we have looked at some colour combinations that work well, the one below does not. Why? Simply because the three vivid colours clash with each other and create a confusing illusion.

The above are just simple examples but the possibilities are endless.

Your Colouring

So far we have looked at how colours are made up and looked at some examples of colour combinations. This is only part of colour of the work and image consultant does, just as important is matching colours to a persons natural colouring. Below we have illustrated this concept using three broad categories.

Dark skin tone

Dark-skinned men tend to have black or dark brown hair and dark eyes. colours that should be used here should contrast with the dark features The contrast breaks up look and catches the eye.

Colors you look your best in:

Pink, White, Khaki, Vibrant Blue and Grey.

Colors you should avoid:

Navy Blue, Dark Brown, Turquoise and Light Green.

Tropical colours and really dark shades should be avoided. While black and navy blue are corporate colours and are hard to avoid, try to contrast them with colours that suit you for a contrasting look.

Example: Medium Skin Tone

Medium-toned skin can be combined with blonde or black hair. Eye colour can vary from blue to black. Both light and dark colours work well here, as they will both contrast well with your skin.

Best Colours

Any, but see note below.

Possible Colours To Avoid:

Purple, Dark Brown, Red and Olive.

Individually a person in this group should avoid colours that blend to closely to their skin n olive complexion, avoid wearing olive-colored or brown clothing.

Example: Pale Skin Tone

Pale-skin men will tend to be combined with red, blonde, or dirty blonde hair. Eye color is often just as fair, including green, blue, gray, or brown. If you match this description, your best bet is to go with more subdued colors and pastels. These will blend well with your skin tone, and create a look that is easy on the eye.

Best Colours:

Light Blue, Brown, Beige, Off-White and Deep Blue.

Colours To Avoid:

Red, Pink, Orange, Yellow, Lime, Green and Purple

The aim should be to avoid harsh or bright colours since these give you a washed out look. Your clothes will stand out and you wont, wearing vibrant colours is even worse and should be avoided.

Use Colour To Your Advantage

The above is a short introduction on how to use colour to your advantage. Your image consultant can show you how to wear the right colours, at the right time for maximum impact. Using colours correctly can change your life for the better and our aim is to show you how. We look forward to hearing from you.